United Nations S/PV.3624

Security Council

Fifty-first Year

Provisional

3624th Meeting

Monday, 29 January 1996, 5.40 p.m.

New York

President:	Sir John Weston	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Botswana	Mr. Legwaila
	Chile	Mr. Searle
	China	Mr. Qin Huasun
	Egypt	Mr. Elaraby
	France	Mr. Ladsous
	Germany	Mr. Rudolph
	Guinea-Bissau	Mr. Lopes da Rosa
	Honduras	Mr. Martínez Blanco
	Indonesia	Mr. Wibisono
	Italy	Mr. Casardi
	Poland	Mr. Wlosowicz
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Park
	Russian Federation	Mr. Shkourko
	United States of America	Mrs. Albright

Agenda

The situation in Liberia

Fifteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (S/1996/47 and Add.1)

96-85107 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

The meeting was called to order at 5.40 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Liberia

Fifteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (S/1996/47 and Add.1)

The President: In accordance with the decision taken at the 3,621st meeting, I welcome the distinguished Member of the Collective Presidency of the Liberian National Transitional Government and request the Chief of Protocol to escort His Excellency to his seat.

Mr. Alhaji G.V. Kromah, Member of the Collective Presidency of the Liberian National Transitional Government, was escorted to a seat at the Security Council table.

The President: The Security Council began its consideration of this item at the 3,621st meeting, on 25 January 1996. The Council will now resume its consideration of the item.

Members of the Council have before them the fifteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia, documents S/1996/47 and Add.1.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/1996/57, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

The first speaker is the Member of the Collective Presidency of the Liberian National Transitional Government, His Excellency Alhaji G.V. Kromah, on whom I now call.

Mr. Kromah (Liberia): I bring the members of the Security Council fraternal greetings from my Government and people. We are grateful for the support that the United Nations continues to demonstrate for the peaceful resolution of the conflict in Liberia. Indeed, for half a century now the United Nations has remained the hope of the universal human family, struggling in most cases to defend the deprived and to enhance the inalienable mission of humankind.

We in Liberia are indeed thankful to almighty God for preserving our nationhood and sovereignty during the past six years, most of which have witnessed a devastating and tragic war, clearly generated by internal and external interests. More than ever before in this running saga of hardship for our people, there is hope now for lasting peace. The leaders and the people of Liberia have no choice but to obey the call of reality: live in peace or live no more.

Consequently, the various peace accords brokered by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and witnessed by the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity have culminated in a unified Government in Monrovia, with all parties to the conflict participating. The Liberian Government, headed by a six-man Collective Presidency called the Council of State, has established the hope that full normality will be restored in Liberia. The principle of collective fate is today working so heavily in favour of peace that I and my colleagues on the Council of State consider the peace process now to be irreversible, no matter what happens and no matter what one hears or sees.

Our objective is not to impress any powerful nation or the international community that we are making progress. Our target is realistic in that we Liberians were the direct and immediate victims of the conflict and are equally the front-line and immediate beneficiaries of any resulting peace and democracy. This is the basis of the goodwill, sincerity and commitment that must necessarily be demonstrated by the Liberian side of the conflict.

I make reference to a Liberian side because there is a non-Liberian side to the problem and its resolution. It is common knowledge that Liberia cannot produce weapons or ammunition; and yet these have been present in abundant quantity and sophisticated quality to inflict the calamity at hand. There were also all sorts of sanctions imposed on Liberia, and yet everything prohibited found its way into the country. Even the planning and activities that immediately preceded the war were not information and knowledge exclusive to Liberians. At the peak of the war, invisible hands were felt under and on top of the debris. Yet it was convenient to say the Liberian conflict was an internal matter and needed to be resolved by Liberians alone.

Technically, that declaration was correct. Notwithstanding the acts of external commission or omission, the Liberian people had the ultimate responsibility to reject undesirable influences, whether

internal or external. I assure the Security Council that we have learned our lessons. And from these lessons we are optimistic that our country has a new opportunity to develop faster and better; a new opportunity to build according to our legitimate taste and size; a new opportunity to convert the bitterness, mutual distrust and suspicion, prejudice and hatred into elements of unity and prosperity. We are coerced by our immediate past to achieve peace and democracy.

With this vision, we are not surprised by the reporting of a *New York Times* journalist, who, after having spent less than 10 hours in Monrovia several days ago, considers our reference to an emerging renaissance in Liberia as an example of our "going out of our mind." The journalist in question is not alone in his analysis. His opinion is certainly shared by those who are equally impatient over appreciating the complexity of the Liberian conflict, who prefer to confine their perceptions to the surface of the problem and yet venture to appear to be making profound analyses of the situation and its current status.

It is important to note that more than 65 per cent of fighters in the various warring factions in Liberia are relatives of more than half a million refugees and of nearly an equal number of displaced Liberians. Let me therefore assure the Council that the vast majority of these fighters want to disarm this very minute.

That is one of the fundamental reasons why the warring party leaders hastened to sign the Abuja Agreement, which brought the current Government into office. Upon our inauguration on 1 September last year, we immediately invited the Field Commander and staff of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to the Executive Mansion and clearly indicated our readiness for the deployment of the peace- keepers and the subsequent disarmament of our fighters. The Field Commander was very blunt and simply told us that he was not ready, due to the lack of logistics and additional manpower.

We quickly launched a campaign to sensitize the international community to the need to fulfil its promises to cooperate with the Liberian peace process. The Government of Liberia took the lead in this public relations drive and, thanks to the overwhelming impetus of ECOWAS and the United Nations, a donors conference was subsequently organized by the Secretary-General in conjunction with the ECOWAS Chairman, President J.J. Rawlings of Ghana. We hope that the initial pledges made at that conference here in New York will not only be fulfilled expeditiously, but that further consideration will be given to the rest of the expenditure requirement, which will be useful in aborting and preventing the regrettable and undue military and political hiccups in the peace process.

A key factor in paving the way for peace and guaranteed elections in Liberia is disarmament. In addition to the efforts of the Government that I have already mentioned, we have set up the National Disarmament and Demobilization Commission (NDDC), empowered, among other things, to educate and inform all of the combatants about the timetable for deployment and disarmament, as well as to explain the process of reintegration into the larger community. The NDDC, composed of senior warring party officers and civilians, seems properly poised to have a positive impact on the fighters.

Deployment of the peace-keepers has started, and we expect the completion of this exercise, accompanied by the backing promised by the international community, to set the real pace for disarmament. It is not only ECOMOG that is underequipped, but also the Liberian Government and the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), the two other institutions that are required by the peace agreements to implement various relevant provisions of the accords. We hear the good news of more helicopters coming for UNOMIL, but the chronic need for UNOMIL to prepare the assembly sites and to marshal the provision of food for the disengaged soldiers is another determining factor in disarming the fighters. The logistical strength of the NDDC and other relevant institutions of the Government is also decisive in the disarmament exercise. We have submitted preliminary packages for these programmes.

Equally important is adherence to the provision in the agreements that there shall be no use of the communications media or other methods to propagate hostility between the warring groups. There is presently an internal campaign being orchestrated in Monrovia to make future political capital, in the midst of the current military arrangements to disarm. With the Council's support, the Government of Liberia intends to deal with this matter amicably and properly.

We are studying a strategy whereby the Government will encourage consultation and dialogue with civic and political groups on major issues, in a bid to find common ground. This, we hope, will improve the security psychology, and reduce feelings of isolation.

I turn to the question of the aid channel. In troubled spots around the world, this decade has seen the proliferation, rapid expansion and deployment of international non-governmental organizations through which massive bilateral, institutional and international funding has been channelled. Along with certain specialized agencies of the United Nations, these non-governmental organizations have effectively been in exclusive charge not only of receiving funds, but of determining, in many cases, where in their country of assignment they want to be. Less than half of their budgets serves as assistance for the declared targets and beneficiaries. There is certainly a need for adjustment in these arrangements and attitudes.

My next subject is the election programme. One of the best things the Liberian people expect to gain from their bitter experience is guaranteed elections for national and local officials of the government. This is provided for in the peace agreements as a final stage following deployment, disarmament, repatriation of refugees and registration of voters.

At this point, we are seeing only marginal international interest in the election programme. We appeal for greater assistance and encouragement: everything must be done to ensure that we have the type of elections that will engender lasting peace.

Many of us in the current Government are impatient with the form of government which has been put together with the sole aim of bringing peace to our nation.

I come now to the matter of public services. While endeavouring to manage the business of disarmament, the Liberian Government also has the mandate and the obligation to supervise the provision of basic public services. Public expectations here are high, and the demands on those services are no less so. All these variables affect the nature of the peace process: local politicians are making full use of the strains and gaps in public services to strengthen their individual positions, as if these were normal times. The Government has therefore implored its vital agencies and institutions to confront face on the basic economic and other problems at the root of reconstruction.

In the past few months, Liberia has reinforced relations with the International Monetary Fund and held discussions with the World Bank, the African Development Bank and other multilateral creditors. The discussions have been centred on the need to provide technical assistance for capacity-building. In the meantime, the Government is putting in place certain minimum fiscal policies intended to improve tax and revenue administration and check government spending. A debt-relief strategy is also being designed, with the assistance of the multilateral institutions.

In the public safety area, we have given priority to the police and other civic-oriented institutions to cater to the social and other problems attendant on a society at war with itself. An effective and efficient police service will not only raise the public's confidence and sense of security, but will also provide a proper substitute for the warring factions as the first line of contact with civilians throughout the Liberian countryside.

Delivery of basic health care and provision of safe drinking water, together with the supply of electricity, particularly in the densely populated city of Monrovia, have also become priority concerns for the Government. We are encouraging the privatization of important components of the public service institutions as a measure to speed up recovery in these areas.

An inter-ministerial economic management committee is now carrying out a special study on how natural resources can be utilized to the full for reconstruction, taking into consideration the crucial mistakes that were made in the past.

In conclusion, my colleagues and I in Liberia's Collective Presidency are not under the illusion that this Government is the panacea for Liberia's problems; nor do we believe that the United Nations should do for Liberia what Liberians can do and ought to do for themselves.

On behalf of all my colleagues, I can say that we take the blame for the past and will take the blame for the future: we accept the responsibility of restructuring our country, shoulder to shoulder with our compatriots. It is only natural that the United Nations and the rest of the international community should assume their moral obligations towards Liberia as a founding member of the United Nations and as a place where human beings live.

We are particularly delighted by the fact that, since our Government was installed in September last year, the United Nations has been pleased to send us important visitors, led by the Secretary General himself, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, followed by the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, Her Excellency Mrs. Madeleine Albright, and the United Nations

Development Programme Administrator, Mr. James Gustave Speth. The members of the Collective Presidency had extremely useful exchanges with these visitors in an atmosphere of mutual respect. The Government was left with the distinct impression that these visitors fully appreciated the level of commitment to the peace process of the members of the Presidency, three of whom are the leaders of the key warring parties.

It is unfortunate that the mass media have portrayed the United States Ambassador as having gone to Monrovia to issue instructions and orders to us, when in fact the scenario was quite respectful and encouraging.

Liberia is the portion of God's planet that has been given to us. We almost lost it. This has strengthened us. The Economic Community of West African States has done well on behalf of the international system. More than ever before, the United Nations and the individual States concerned should fully identify with our just aspirations at this time: the areas of involvement are clear, and we will do our best to help ourselves, with the Council's solidarity and cooperation.

Mr. Casardi (Italy): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union: Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Lithuania, Slovakia and Cyprus have associated themselves with this statement.

Only five months ago, in August last year, the Liberian factions reached an Agreement in Abuja to put an end to the civil war that had ravaged their country for the previous six years. The Agreement was a turning-point in the efforts to start a process of national reconciliation after a long war that had taken a huge toll on the country: 150,000 people had lost their lives in the endless cycle of violence, and 800,000 people had been forced to leave Liberia. The growing awareness that the six years of war had been completely in vain, the weariness of the people and the deadlock between the factions laid the groundwork for an agreement.

We now have before us a very gloomy and disturbing picture of the peace process as presented to us by the Secretary-General in his latest report. Major violations of the cease-fire have occurred, causing the tragic deaths of a number of African soldiers in the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). Allow me to take this opportunity to express the sincere condolences of the European Union to the families and Governments of the soldiers that have lost their lives.

These are sad developments for a unique peace-keeping operation that, for the first time, has been implemented to a large extent through the participation of the military contingents of an African subregional organization deployed side by side with the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL). This is why its future success is bound to have wide-ranging implications that will be felt beyond the region immediately concerned.

Despite these tragic developments, and subsequent delays in the implementation of the Abuja Agreement, we share the opinion of the Secretary-General that the United Nations and the international community must remain committed to the Liberian peace process and that UNOMIL will have a crucial role to play in that respect. We should not let the entrenched interest of a few individuals, or the passive adjustment of the combatants to a never-ending state of war — they are often teenagers who have known little else in their lives — prevail over the desperate need for peace in this devastated country.

The international community must now urge the Liberian factions to fulfil their obligations and enable the start of an effective disengagement of forces and, in due course, disarmament and demobilization of troops. It is the hope of the European Union that conditions will be in place to hold political elections in the country next August, as scheduled in the Abuja Agreement.

The draft resolution, on which the Council is to take action, clearly spells out that the international community's continued support for the peace process, including the participation of UNOMIL, is contingent upon the commitment of the Liberian parties to resolve their differences peacefully and to achieve national reconciliation. Their behaviour will be carefully monitored and the leaders will be held responsible for the deeds of their men. The report that the Secretary-General is requested to present by the end of March will provide an opportunity for further scrutiny.

The draft resolution places squarely on the Liberian factions the responsibility to respect the status and ensure the safety of ECOMOG and UNOMIL personnel, as well as of all those engaged in the delivery of humanitarian assistance. We also appreciate the reference to the importance of respect for human rights and to the need to rehabilitate the penitentiary system in the country.

It is our hope that the easing of tensions will allow regular relief operations to take place throughout the

country. The economic recovery of Liberia should become the first priority, in order to improve the living conditions of its population and to create a climate of greater stability. In this connection, let me recall that the European Union, as a whole, is by far the largest donor of humanitarian, food and rehabilitation assistance to Liberia since 1990. These contributions will also help to rebuild the economic infrastructure of the country, so that Liberia can once again make full use of its natural resources for the benefit of its people.

The President: It is my understanding that the Council is now ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall first call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Legwaila (Botswana): Let me join you, Sir, in welcoming the distinguished Member of the Liberian Council of State to New York. We have no doubt that the statement he has just made will enrich our appreciation of the current situation in Liberia.

The delegation of Botswana had the opportunity to express its views concerning the situation in Liberia on 25 January 1996, when the Security Council considered the fifteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) in a formal meeting. The Security Council benefited immensely from the views of the African delegations that participated in that meeting, whose statements reflected their deep concern and frustration at the slow pace in the implementation of the Abuja peace Agreement. The presence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Liberian National Transitional Government (LNTG) at that meeting was very welcome.

We were encouraged to learn that the LNTG is determined to pursue the cause of peace, and that it will not allow the unfortunate events of 28 December 1995 to derail the peace process. This position was reinforced by the statements of the representatives of member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) that the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) will stay the course in Liberia until durable peace is attained in that country. This iron determination to succeed, even in the face of adverse conditions, should encourage the international community to assist ECOMOG in the implementation of the peace Agreement, especially in the areas of demobilization and reintegration of former fighters into civilian life.

My delegation is grateful to Ambassador Albright of the United States of America for the information she shared with the Council, following her recent visit to Liberia and other countries. We appreciate the frank and direct manner in which she represented the concerns of the United States to the LNTG and the people of Liberia regarding the delays in the disengagement, disarmament and demobilization of combatants. Botswana shares most of these concerns, and it is our hope that the Liberian political leaders and parties will make concerted efforts to expedite the implementation of the peace Agreement. The Security Council has repeatedly stated that the people of Liberia, especially their leaders, bear the ultimate responsibility for achieving peace and national reconciliation. This means, *inter alia*, that the Liberian factions should desist from reoccupying positions and checkpoints which they had earlier abandoned in the course of the implementation of the peace Agreement. These unacceptable activities can only create distrust and mutual suspicions among the Liberian leaders and parties, which could have undesirable consequences for the peace process. Furthermore, it is a matter of paramount importance that the Liberian factions should urgently give ECOMOG security guarantees to enable it to carry out further deployments. We fully support ECOMOG's decision not to continue with the deployments until the security of their troops is guaranteed.

The peace process in Liberia is at the crossroads. Liberian political leaders and parties must recognize that free and fair elections can only be held in an atmosphere in which peace and stability prevail and in which the safety and security of one and all is assured, and that it is up to them to create such conditions well in advance of the elections. Operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution calls upon them to do so expeditiously. The legislative and presidential elections must not be held in an atmosphere in which the people of Liberia can be threatened with dire consequences if they vote for a particular party of their choice, nor should those who lose at the ballot box have the infrastructure to resort to the bullet box.

Botswana strongly believes that the people of Liberia, like other peoples around the world, deserve to live in peace. They have the right to bring up their children in conditions of peace, to pass on to future generations the values of being good citizens and

productive members of society. We share their hopes and aspirations to be afforded a chance to concentrate their efforts on the rehabilitation and reconstruction of their war-torn country and economy. As we extend the mandate of UNOMIL to 31 May 1996, it is our hope that considerable progress will be made in the implementation of the peace Agreement, and that the political leaders and parties in Liberia will not squander this opportunity. There might not be another one.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like first to welcome Mr. Kromah, Member of the Collective Presidency of the Liberian National Transitional Government, and to thank him for his extremely complete report, which we all followed with great interest.

The Council's special meeting last week to study the fifteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Liberia reflects the importance that the international community attaches to the question of Liberia as well as its consensus on the need to assist our brothers in Liberia. In that respect, I should like to thank the Permanent Representative of the United States, Mrs. Albright, for the complete report that she presented to us after her visit to the region.

The Security Council, in approving the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) to 31 May 1996, should encourage the political leaders in Liberia to implement the provisions of the Abuja Agreement as quickly as possible so that this opportunity is not lost.

A settlement of the question of Liberia is now at hand. This increases the responsibility of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which should make the greatest possible efforts to promote the peace process and check any attempts dictated by narrow interests or considerations. It is therefore important to grant all necessary assistance to the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) so that it can discharge its mission.

The delegation of Egypt calls upon all the Liberian factions and their leaders to ensure the demobilization and disarmament of combatants in order to facilitate their reintegration into civil society, and to allow the United Nations to ensure the deployment of the observers and to increase their number to 160.

Our delegation also urges all Liberians to fully cooperate with UNOMIL and to give it the necessary protection. We should also like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the United Nations for the efforts that it is currently making in Liberia and for the technical and humanitarian assistance provided by the international community to the Liberian people. We hope that this will allow for the recovery and reconstruction of Liberia and enable it to resume its proper place, both regionally and internationally.

The Egyptian delegation, convinced of the need to allow the people of Liberia to implement security and stability and to put an end to the sufferings that have gone on since the civil war of 1989, will vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Finally, we hope that the progress report to be submitted by the Secretary-General to the Council by the end of March will include positive elements reflecting a real desire for peace.

Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia): At the outset, my delegation would like to welcome the Member of the Collective Presidency of the Liberian National Transitional Government and to express our appreciation for his insightful statement.

It was only last week that the Security Council convened a formal open debate regarding the situation in Liberia, which provided an opportunity for the general membership to actively participate in the discussion of a question of which the Council is actively seized. My delegation sincerely welcomes the convening of such a meeting, for it not only enhanced transparency in the work of the Council, but also permitted Council members to obtain the valuable input and observations of all interested parties — most importantly from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia — necessary for taking the appropriate decision. My delegation therefore hopes that such arrangements will in future be further encouraged.

On that occasion, the Indonesian delegation, together with the other members of the Council, expressed its position. As such, it is the intention of my delegation not to repeat what has already been stated at the formal open debate last week, but to provide a few brief additional remarks on the draft resolution.

In spite of the recent cease-fire violations and armed attacks against the personnel of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group

(ECOMOG) and against civilians, which have caused substantial delays in the implementation of the Abuja Agreement, we nevertheless wish to reiterate that we see a ray of hope on the horizon. We are encouraged by the recent steps taken by the Secretary-General to prepare for the legislative and presidential elections, scheduled to take place in August 1996. We also note the recently concluded agreement between the Liberian National Transitional Government (LNTG) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), establishing the framework for the repatriation and reintegration of refugees. Moreover, cooperation between UNOMIL and the LNTG, as well as with other United Nations agencies and local and international non-governmental organizations, continues to prevail, facilitating support for the Liberian judicial system and human rights groups. And, lastly, a coordinated effort on the part of the international community is beginning to take place to address reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts.

In view of these considerations, my delegation strongly urges the Liberian parties and their leadership to see the extension of the mandate of UNOMIL as an opportunity to strive for substantial progress on all outstanding issues of the peace process, and to demonstrate genuine political will to get the peace process back on track by abiding by and implementing all the agreements and commitments they themselves have concluded. Such measures would allow the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration — a prerequisite for national reconciliation — to be expeditiously undertaken. Moreover, it is our fervent hope that within this period the Liberian leadership will avail itself of the opportunity to also demonstrate its respect for the role of the international, regional and subregional organizations in the peace process.

Another aspect that my delegation considers imperative is that this draft resolution should convey to the parties in Liberia a clear and unequivocal message that support for the peace process by the international community cannot continue indefinitely. This support will undoubtedly be contingent on a demonstrated commitment by the Liberian parties to resolve their differences peacefully and to achieve national reconciliation, consistent with the objectives of the peace process.

In the light of these observations, the draft resolution before us today enjoys the strong support of the Indonesian delegation, and we will therefore vote in favour of its adoption. We also look forward to the Secretary-General's progress report concerning the progress in disarmament and demobilization, and in planning for elections, as requested in operative paragraph 9.

Mr. Martínez Blanco (Honduras) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation wishes at the outset to welcome the Member of the Collective Presidency of the Liberian National Transitional Government and to thank him for participating in the work of the Security Council today.

As it did at the Security Council's meeting to consider the fifteenth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), my delegation wishes to express its concern at the recent incidents in Liberia — cease-fire violations and attacks against personnel of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) — and at delays in the process of disengagement and disarmament of Liberian forces, which affect the international community's efforts to restore peace, security and stability in that country.

We regret also that those incidents are also having an effect on the fulfilment of the commitments undertaken in the Abuja Agreement, the implementation of which is critical for the future of Liberia. We believe that the leaders of the Liberian factions should demonstrate the political will to support the peace process; they cannot expect ECOWAS and the international community to support the Liberian peace process indefinitely.

The recent armed attack against ECOMOG contingents in the town of Tubmanburg was a serious setback for the peace process and will delay the deployment of ECOMOG and UNOMIL forces, for which there are now no guarantees of safety. My delegation believes that the security situation in Liberia will improve only if the factions respect the cease-fire; make clear progress in the disengagement of forces; withdraw from checkpoints; permit the community of humanitarian-aid donors to carry out its work freely; cooperate with ECOMOG and UNOMIL in the work of disarmament and demobilization; and strictly respect the status of ECOMOG and UNOMIL personnel.

We hope that the Liberian factions will fulfil all those commitments. It is in that hope that my delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution before the Council.

Mr. Lopes da Rosa (Guinea-Bissau) (*interpretation from French*): I wish first of all to welcome His Excellency Alhaji G.V. Kromah, Member of the Collective Presidency of the Liberian National Transitional Government, and to thank him most sincerely for the information he has conveyed to the Council.

During the formal meeting of the Security Council on 25 January 1996, the delegation of Guinea-Bissau expressed its views on the fifteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL). We wish none the less to take this opportunity to reaffirm our position and to make a number of comments before the Security Council adopts the draft resolution before it.

My delegation wishes first to express its thanks to Ambassador Albright and her entire delegation for having submitted the draft resolution. We endorse that text because it covers all the concerns expressed in the debate on the report of the Secretary-General. My delegation will therefore vote in favour of the draft resolution, laying particular stress on the fourth preambular paragraph and on operative paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 11 and 16.

The delegation of Guinea-Bissau is gravely concerned by the slow implementation of the peace process and by the recent attacks against the troops of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and against the civilian population. We believe that these hostile acts must end immediately so as to enable ECOMOG and UNOMIL to carry out fully their arduous and complex task of maintaining peace and stability in Liberia.

Accordingly, we believe that the status of the personnel of ECOMOG, of UNOMIL and of humanitarian agencies must be strictly respected by all Liberian factions, so that this personnel can continue to ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance throughout the country in accordance with the relevant rules of international humanitarian law.

As we have already said, the political will and the firm determination of the parties concerned are critical for the settlement of this conflict. The Liberian parties should respect and fully implement all agreements reached and all the commitments they have undertaken, particularly with respect to the cease-fire and to the disarmament and demobilization of combatants, with a view to national reconciliation. We think this could make an important contribution to ensuring continued support by the international community for the peace process in this brotherly nation.

My delegation appeals urgently to the international community to keep the promises it made at the Conference on Assistance to Liberia, held on 27 October 1995, and to continue to provide financial and logistical assistance to the personnel of ECOMOG and UNOMIL. In that connection, we wish once again to thank all countries that have provided assistance, and we encourage others, within their means, to do likewise.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): I would like to join you, Mr. President, in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Kromah, Member of the Collective Presidency of the Liberian National Transitional Government. I thank him for the informative statement he made here today. It is reassuring to hear from him that the Collective Presidency is committed to achieving a lasting peace.

My Government's views on the situation in Liberia are already known from my statement in the orientation debate last week. I will not repeat them here today. Rather, let me confine myself to stressing a few important points to which my Government attaches particular importance.

First, we commend the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for its central role in restoring peace and stability in Liberia, and we express our appreciation to the troop-contributing countries. We reiterate the importance of close cooperation and coordination between the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), ECOWAS and the Member States concerned for the success of peace-keeping operations in Liberia. This three-way cooperation, in our view, sets an example that can be applied in dealing with other situations in Africa.

Secondly, we call upon all factions in Liberia to abide by their commitments to the peace process as envisaged in the Abuja Agreement. While deploring the recent incident of renewed hostilities, which was a setback to the peace process, we look forward to smooth progress in the disarmament and demobilization of combatants and in their reintegration into civil society.

Thirdly, we reiterate our view that the international community cannot replace the Liberian people's own efforts to achieve peace, national reconciliation and democracy. It is the people and the leaders of Liberia

themselves who are ultimately responsible for rebuilding a land of peace, liberty and prosperity.

In keeping with these remarks, my delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution before us.

The President: I shall now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/1996/57.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Botswana, Chile, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Indonesia, Italy, Poland, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1041 (1996).

I shall now call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mrs. Albright (United States of America): I am very pleased to see the Member of the Council of State here, Mr. Kromah, having seen him just a few days ago in Monrovia.

The United States supports the extension of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) mandate until 31 May. This support, however, is not without reservations. During my recent visit to Monrovia, I was impressed by the progress that has been made and by the stated commitment of the Council of State to implement the Abuja Agreement. This assurance has been repeated here today in the Security Council by Member Kromah.

But, unfortunately, today we have also heard the representative of Liberia offer many different — and often surprising — explanations for his country's many problems. As the representative surely knows from my visit, the United States and the international community can offer a helping hand, but only Liberians can pull themselves out of the horror of war. I wish to reiterate here what I made very clear in speaking with all the parties in Liberia: the United States and the international community will not tolerate further delay. Now it is time for action. The forces of peace and reconciliation must demonstrate that they are more powerful than those that would wreak further destruction on the innocent Liberian people. Now is the time to implement the key operational provision of the Abuja Agreement: getting the fighters to give up their weapons and rejoin society, while focusing especially on the four-to-six thousand child soldiers. As this resolution makes clear, there must be strict implementation of disarmament and demobilization, with no delays and no deviations from the Abuja Agreement.

The United States recognizes the contribution that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) is now making to bring stability to Liberia. We call on the ECOMOG commanders to deploy their forces as quickly as possible to help create the conditions necessary to promote the peace process. The United States also calls upon the Council of State to redouble its efforts to rapidly move the peace process forward.

I also commend the contributions and sacrifices being made by UNOMIL personnel in Liberia. The United States expects UNOMIL to follow through on all its responsibilities, including investigating and reporting to the Secretary-General on human rights abuses, major violations of international humanitarian law and humanitarian assistance activities. I urge UNOMIL and ECOMOG to maintain close operational contact to ensure that they can effectively accomplish their difficult missions.

Adoption of this resolution extending the UNOMIL mandate is an important demonstration of the Security Council's commitment to restoring peace, stability and the basic conditions for a normal life to the Liberian people. But this commitment demands equal good will from the Liberian side. During this period, my Government will monitor closely the implementation of the Abuja Agreement, which is Liberia's best chance to achieve peace and justice and the key to continued international support. We will view with special interest what the Secretary-General's interim report will say on progress in this regard.

Monrovia is a city of startling contrasts. There are destroyed buildings housing thousands of displaced persons and laundry hanging from the rafters of a trashed Foreign Ministry. At the same time, busy people are trading and trying to make a living and, most impressively, non-governmental organizations programmes are providing training, for a new life, in farming, masonry or plumbing. These contrasts are as stark as the difference between the past and the future.

My impression from being there is that the people are ready for the future, and the leaders must not delay in letting them have it. Only then will there be a true renaissance in Liberia.

In the presence of one of the Members of Liberia's Council of State, I wish to re-emphasize the crucial role that Liberia's leaders must play in this process. Their failure to act will endanger further assistance from the international community. Their neighbours in West Africa and the entire international community have created an opportunity for peace and a return to democracy. They must seize it now. You must seize it now.

Mr. Rudolph (Germany): My delegation would also like to welcome the distinguished Member of the Collective Presidency of the Liberian National Transitional Government, Alhaji G. V. Kromah, and to thank him for sharing with us his views on the situation in Liberia.

Germany voted in favour of extending the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) until 31 May 1996. We had already made our position clear on the occasion of the public debate last week. We would like, however, to restate some of the points we made on that occasion. In this context, Germany fully supports the statement made by Italy on behalf of the European Union.

We have to insist that Liberia must make substantive progress in the peace process by the end of the present mandate. This should prove that the Abuja Agreement can be the lasting foundation for a peace settlement in Liberia. We continue, however, to be extremely concerned at the lack of progress achieved in the implementation of the Abuja Agreement. We have not been able to observe any concrete steps during recent months. The parties in Liberia have fallen several months behind the agreed schedule. Furthermore, the recent outbreak of fighting is a severe setback to the efforts undertaken by the international community to mediate in the Liberian conflict.

In this context, we would like to make clear once again that the cessation of hostilities is also essential for any reconstruction and development measures by which the international community might help Liberia and its people overcome the devastating consequences of the civil war. The warring parties are called upon to make up for the delays already incurred in the peace process. 31 May 1996 is the deadline for this. Until then, the political will of the parties to achieve tangible progress will have to be monitored very carefully. If there is no visible progress soon with regard to maintaining the cease-fire, disengagement of troops and disarmament, we will have difficulty supporting a further extension of the mandate of UNOMIL. The warring parties would be responsible for this.

We welcome, however, the fact that the factions represented in the Council of State seem determined to adhere to the Abuja Agreement, and we urge them to exert the necessary control over their military forces. A wider deployment of ECOMOG throughout the country should be a necessary accompanying measure, and it will be an important stabilizing factor for the country as a whole. In this context, my Government would like to emphasize the important and useful role which ECOMOG has been playing, and we would like to thank the troop-contributing countries.

The President: There are no further speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda.

The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 6.40 p.m.